Social and Emotional Development in Children (Bright Tots)

SUBTOPIC

 Preschool children—foundation of problems that evidence themselves in elementary school

KEY TERMS

Self control: One of the most important skills that children develop is self-control the ability to manage one’s behavior such as resist impulses, maintain focus, and make positive decisions even if there are other more tempting options available. Self-control motivates the ability to take on every task, so that it has a linking for not just how children get along with one another but also to be attentive and learn in the classroom

KEY STATISTICS

The problems begin before kindergarten in studies as many as 32 percent of preschoolers in Head Start programs have behavioral problems.

A combination of biological, behavioral, and environmental factors place certain children and youth at greater risk than others for emotional and behavioral disorders that can range from mild to severe, some long lasting. Incidence studies results that almost 21% of children, ages 9 to 17, meet the criteria for a mental health diagnosis.

USEFUL QUOTATIONS

“Recognition of early social and emotional problems in toddlers and preschool children is necessary

in achieving the best developmental outcomes. Social and emotional difficulties persist over time and are very resistant to change. If left untreated, early-onset conduct problems (aggression, rebellion, oppositional behaviors and emotional disturbances) place children at high risk for frequent social and emotional difficulties, under achievement, school drop-out, finally delinquency, and later criminal offenses.”

 “Early detection and intervention of social and emotional problems can have a long-term impact on

the developing child in major areas. The development of emotional self-control and social ability in the early years plays a significant role in determining the way children think, learn, react to obstacles, and develop relationships throughout their lives. When children are young, the adults around them (parents, other adult caregivers, preschool teachers) are the most important influences on their social and emotional development.”

EMPHASES, STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES

**Emphasis**: Problems entering school:

Children with emotional and social problems enter kindergarten unable to learn because they cannot pay attention, remember cause and effect, or interact socially in a school setting. As a result there are a number of children who are hard to manage in the classroom. These children cannot get along with others, follow directions, and are impulsive. They show hostility and aggression in the classroom and on the playground. The problems begin before kindergarten in studies as many as 32 percent of preschoolers in Head Start programs have behavioral problems.

Children struggling with social and emotional skills means that teachers spend too much of their time trying to manage unruly children and spend too little time teaching. Early childhood teachers report that they are extremely concerned about growing classroom management problems, and that they are unprepared to handle them. Kindergarten teacher’s report that more than half of their students come to school unequipped for learning academic subjects.

Furthermore, children may use problem behavior to get their needs met for a variety of reasons. For example, the child may have language development problems, social/emotional delays, difficulties with peer interactions, or developmental disabilities. If these problems are not addressed, the result can be increasing aggression, and behavioral problems.

**Strength**: identifies WHY strong social development is so critical:

Researchers believe that children with troublesome, disorderly behavior (poor social and emotional skills) are at risk for these potential problems for at least three reasons:

•        Teachers find it harder to teach them, seeing them as less socially and academically capable, and therefore provide them with less positive feedback.

•        Peers reject them, which cuts off an important opportunity for learning and emotional support.

•        Children faced with this rejection from peers and teachers tend to dislike school and learning, which leads to lower school attendance and poorer outcomes.

Since difficult behavior shows itself early, before children begin kindergarten, the cycle of rejection and negative experiences begins early, too. The early experience of rejection can have lasting emotional and behavioral impressions beyond elementary school, creating a descending spiral that becomes difficult to reverse.

Schools play an essential role in promoting children’s social and emotional development because most children ages 5-18 attend school, and because social and emotional well-being is essential to children’s ability to learn and succeed in school. By integrating an emphasis on social-emotional learning in schools, students are better able to resolve social interaction problems and prevent antisocial behavior, as well as to achieve positive academic outcomes.

**Strength**: includes goals for improving soc-emo dev

•        Understand and talk about the child’s feelings.
•        Make the child aware of the views of others and realize that the other person’s feelings may be

different from his/her own feelings.
•        Teach the child to establish relationships with adults and maintain an ongoing friendship with

at least one other child.
•        Allow the child to enter a group successfully such as soft-ball team, soccer game, etc.
•        Instruct the child to maintain an activity for a reasonable period of time with minimum adult

supervision.

 (2) ARTICLE

 Family Involvement in Elementary School Children’s Education (Harvard)

TOPIC

 Social-emotional development in elementary school

SUBTOPIC

As in the period of early childhood, family involvement processes are critical for elementary-school-age children’s learning and development. However, in elementary school, the specific activities and nature of these processes change.

The brief summarizes the latest evidence base on effective involvement for elementary school children—that is, the studies that link family involvement in elementary schools to children’s outcomes. It also profiles programs that have been evaluated to show what works to promote family involvement in the elementary school years. The brief concludes with implications for policy, practice, and research.

KEY TERMS

To achieve these results, it is necessary to match the child’s developmental needs, the parent’s attitudes and practices, and the school’s expectations and support of family involvement. Three family involvement processes for creating this match emerge from the evidence base:

• **Parenting** consists of the attitudes, values, and practices of parents in raising young children.

• **Home–school relationships** are the formal and informal connections between the family and educational setting.

• **Responsibility for learning** is the aspect of parenting that places emphasis on activities in the home and community that promote learning skills in the young child.

The conceptual framework guiding this research review is **complementary learning.** Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) believes that for children and youth to be successful from birth through adolescence, there must be an array of linked learning supports around them. These learning supports include families, early childhood programs, schools, out-of-school time programs and activities, higher education, health and social service agencies, businesses, libraries, museums, and other community-based institutions. HFRP calls this network of supports complementary learning. Complementary learning is characterized by discrete linkages that work together to encourage consistent learning and developmental outcomes for children. These linkages should be continuously in place from birth through adolescence, but the composition and functions of the network will change over time as children mature.

KEY STATISTICS

USEFUL QUOTATIONS

“The No Child Left Behind Act mandates that elementary schools give parents the tools they need to support their children’s learning in the home, communicate regularly with families about children’s academic progress, provide opportunities for family workshops, and offer parents chances to engage in parent leadership activities at the school site.”

EMPHASES, STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES

Weakness:

…readers must keep in mind that family involvement includes other processes beyond those described in this series of briefs. For example, parent leadership, community organizing, and participation in school decision making are not represented in this review. This is not because these forms of family involvement lack value. Instead, their omission reflects the shortage of empirical research linking these activities to children’s outcomes

Emphases:

The quality of the parent–child relationship influences how well children do in school. Child development experts characterize a positive parent–child relationship in terms of support, whereby the parent conveys warmth, sensitivity, and encouragement; appropriate instruction based on the child’s development and characteristics; and respect for the child’s growing autonomy.3 Through interactions with parents and other caregivers, children learn to develop social skills that they transfer from the home to the school context. One study of kindergarteners found that a positive mother–child interaction—one that is sensitive and elicits prosocial behavior—is associated with children’s social and academic performance in middle school.4

Home–school relationships in elementary school— including parents communicating with the teacher, helping in the child’s classroom, and participating in school activities—have positive benefits for children. For example, parent participation in school activities in grades K–3 is associated with children’s educational engagement, which includes high-quality work habits and task orientation.2

Responsibility for learning outcomes in the elementary school years falls into four main processes: supporting literacy, helping with homework, managing children’s education, and maintaining high expectations.25

Strengths:

Examples of positive interactions (p5)

(3) ARTICLE

 The Effects of Poverty on Children’s Socioemotional Development: an Ecological Systems Analysis

TOPIC

 Social-emotional development in elementary school

SUBTOPIC

Bronfenbrenner’s ecological systems model of analysis

KEY TERMS

Microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, macrosystems, and chronosystems—five structures of the ecological environment

Behavior problems, ecological systems, poverty, socioemotional development

KEY STATISTICS

One in 5 children in U.S. is poor

USEFUL QUOTATIONS

EMPHASES, STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES

Weakness:

Emphases:

--compared with other children, children of poverty face higher risk of socioemotional problems such as depression, internalizing and externalizing symptoms, lower sociability, problematic peer relations, and disruptive classroom behaviors.

--uses Bronfenbrenner’s process-person-context-time model to look at *how* poverty impacts children and socioemotional development in these ways.

(4) ARTICLE

 Promoting Effective Early Learning: What Every Policymaker Should Know

TOPIC

addresses the question: “What will it take to ensure that young low-income children succeed in the early school years?”

SUBTOPIC

Achievement gap

KEY TERMS

Intentional curriculum:

* An intentional curriculum is: content driven, research-based, emphasizes active engagement with children, includes attention to social and regulatory skills, and is responsive to cultural diversity and children just learning English.
* An intentional curriculum is directive without using drill and kill strategies; it is fun for young children and promotes positive peer and teacher interactions.
* An intentional curriculum is developmentally appropriate.

KEY STATISTICS

* Before entering kindergarten, the average cognitive scores of preschool-age children in the highest socioeconomic group are 60 percent above the average scores of children in the lowest socioeconomic group.[1](http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_695.html#1)
* At age 4 years, children who live below the poverty line are 18 months below what is normal for their age group; by age 10 that gap is still present. For children living in the poorest families, the gap is even larger.[2](http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_695.html#2)
* By the time children from middle-income families with well-educated parents are in third grade, they know about 12,000 words. Third grade children from low-income families with undereducated parents who don’t talk to them very much have vocabularies of around 4,000 words, one-third as many words as their middle-income peers
* poor and low-income children are most likely to be enrolled in early learning programs that are lower quality overall. In fact, a recent study found that early learning classrooms comprised of about 60 percent of children from low-income homes were rated significantly lower in quality indicators of teaching, teacher-child interaction, and provisions for learning than classrooms with fewer low-income children.[7](http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_695.html#7)

USEFUL QUOTATIONS

EMPHASES, STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES

Weakness:

(5) ARTICLE

The Importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bond: Focus on Children in Poverty

TOPIC

Play in healthy child development

SUBTOPIC

Children in poverty

Parent-child interactions/bonding

KEY TERMS

* [children](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/keyword/children)
* [development](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/keyword/development)
* [parents](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/keyword/parents)
* [pediatrician](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/keyword/pediatrician)
* [play](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/keyword/play)
* [poverty](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/keyword/poverty)

KEY STATISTICS

More than 15 million children in the United States younger than 18 years live in poverty

USEFUL QUOTATIONS

“It could be argued that active play is so central to child development that it should be included in the very definition of childhood. Play offers more than cherished memories of growing up, it allows children to develop creativity and imagination while developing physical, cognitive, and emotional strengths”

“Many of these trends are disproportionately affecting underresourced school districts because of targeted efforts to reduce significant academic disparities. It is a national imperative that all children are given the opportunity to reach their academic potential, and efforts to reduce disparities between children with varying levels of resources are urgently needed. It remains important, however, that what is known about child development, including social and emotional learning, remains at the forefront of consideration as policies to raise academic standards and performance for children are created and implemented. Play, in all its forms, needs to be considered as the ideal educational and developmental milieu for children is created. Because poorer children are most dramatically affected by these policies, stakeholders must remain vigilant in ensuring that children do not inadvertently suffer from the diminution of play in their lives while exploring potential solutions to benefit them academically.”

EMPHASES, STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES

Weakness:

**Emphases**:

Play is essential to the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical well-being of children beginning in early childhood. It is a natural tool for children to develop resiliency as they learn to cooperate, overcome challenges, and negotiate with others. Play also allows children to be creative. It provides time for parents to be fully engaged with their children, to bond with their children, and to see the world from the perspective of their child. However, children who live in poverty often face socioeconomic obstacles that impede their rights to have playtime, thus affecting their healthy social-emotional development. For children who are underresourced to reach their highest potential, it is essential that parents, educators, and pediatricians recognize the importance of lifelong benefits that children gain from play.

The optimal developmental milieu for children includes academic enrichment, as well as opportunities for physical, cognitive, social, and emotional growth offered in school, home, and community settings.

because lower-income parents have to deal with additional social, emotional, and economic stressors of daily living, they may have less time, energy, and resources available to provide active and creative playtime at the park, playground, or even in the home.

Play is essential to developing social and emotional ties. First, play helps to build bonds within the family. Children’s healthy development is mediated by appropriate nurturing relationships with consistent caregivers.[**16**](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/129/1/e204#ref-16) Play allows for a different quality of interaction between parent[\*](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/129/1/e204#fn-4) and child, one that allows parents to “listen” in a very different, but productive, way. When parents observe their children playing or join them in child-driven play, they can view the world through their child’s eyes and, therefore, may learn to communicate or offer guidance more effectively. Less-verbal children may be able to express themselves, including their frustrations, through play, allowing their parents an opportunity to better understand their needs. Above all, the intensive engagement and relaxed interactions that occur while playing tell children that their parents are fully paying attention to them and, thereby, contribute to a strong connection.[**17**](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/129/1/e204#ref-17),**[32](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/129/1/e204%22%20%5Cl%20%22ref-32)**,[**33**](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/129/1/e204#ref-33) Play also helps forge connections between children. It allows them to learn how to share, to negotiate and resolve conflicts, and to learn self-advocacy skills when necessary.[**34**](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/129/1/e204#ref-34),**[35](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/129/1/e204%22%20%5Cl%20%22ref-35)** It teaches them leadership as well as group skills that may be useful in adult life.

(6) ARTICLE

A program-wide model for supporting social emotional development and addressing challenging behavior in early childhood settings

TOPIC

Social-emotional development

SUBTOPIC

Challenging behavior in Elementary school, how impacted by social-emo development

KEY TERMS

Teaching pyramid model: we describe the need for universal, secondary, and tertiary interventions to ensure the social emotional development of all children, the provision of targeted supports to children at risk, and the inclusion of interventions for children with persistent challenges

Teaching pyramid model:

KEY STATISTICS

2005-- expulsion rates for preschool children due to behavioral concerns exceeded those of elementary and secondary school students.

A review of longitudinal studies revealed that approximately 50% of preschool children with externalizing problems continued to show problems during their school years, with disruptive behavior showing the highest rates of persistence (Campbell, 1995). There appears to be remarkable stability both within the early years, with 88% of boys identified as aggressive at age 2 continuing to show clinical symptomology at age 5 and 58% remaining in the clinical range at age 6 (Shaw, Gilliom & Giovannelli, 2000) and into adolescence (Egeland, Kalkoske, Gottesman, & Erickson, 1990; Pierce, Ewing & Campbell, 1999). The diagnosis of Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD) in the preschool years is predictive of subsequent diagnoses of ODD and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in grade school, with 50% of children who are diagnosed with ODD in preschool continuing to have difficulties in second and third grade (Lavigne et al., 2001). When children enter school with problem behavior and poor social skills, those problems are likely to persist (NICHD Early Childhood Research Network, 2003).

Data from The Early Childhood Longitudinal Study revealed that 10% of kindergarteners arrive at school with problematic behavior (West, Denton & Germino-Hausken, 2000).

USEFUL QUOTATIONS

Research on the developmental trajectory of young children who have challenging behavior presents a disturbing forecast; young children who have persistent challenging behaviors are highly likely to continue to have problems with socialization and school success, and mental health concerns into adolescence and adulthood (Dunlap et al., 2006).

EMPHASES, STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES

Weakness:

Emphases:

Children living in poverty appear to be especially vulnerable, exhibiting rates that are higher than the general population

Teaching pyramid practices are drawn from the research on the classroom and teaching variables that promote children’s social emotional development or are effective in addressing challenging behavior

-- universal level: we place building positive relationships with children, families, and colleagues as the foundation for all other practices and the universal conditions that are necessary for social competence promotion and behavior guidance.

--relationships level: practices include: actively supporting children’s play; responding to children’s conversations; promoting the communicative attempts of children with language delays and disabilities; providing specific praise to encourage appropriate behavior, developing positive relationships with children and families, and collaborative teaming with colleagues

-- In the Teaching Pyramid model, the provision of explicit instruction in social skills and emotional regulation comprises the secondary practices tier

--, all young children will require adult guidance and instruction to learn how to express their emotions appropriately, play cooperatively with peers, and use social problem solving strategies

Strengths:

Classrooms who have adopted the Teaching Pyramid have visual displays of behavior expectations and classroom rules that are used in the instruction of children to review expectations or discuss the importance of rules. Teaching staff remind children of expected behavior and reference the behavior expectations within the ongoing activities of the day. In the high implementation classrooms, we see well-planned transitions; carefully designed learning activities or centers, and classroom schedules that promote child engagement; and the intentional teaching of social skills within all activities (e.g., group time, centers, outdoor play, bathroom, and snack). Classroom staff are constantly interacting with children, guiding their play, promoting their communication, and providing specific instruction, encouragement and praise for appropriate behavior and the use of social skills.

MAJOR TRENDS AND PATTERNS

This focus on individual children and their families is considered an essential practice in early education

(7) ARTICLE

Parent Involvement and Children's Academic and Social Development in Elementary School

TOPIC

SUBTOPIC

Higher levels of parent involvement

KEY TERMS

KEY STATISTICS

USEFUL QUOTATIONS

“The results of the between-child analyses suggested that higher parent involvement, as reported by mothers and teachers, promotes better social skills, fewer problem behaviors, and is unrelated to average achievement across elementary school. However, between-child variation in the average levels of parent involvement was generally not predictive of growth in achievement and socioemotional functioning across elementary school.”

EMPHASES, STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES

Weakness:

Emphases:

Over the years, a large literature has documented the importance of parent involvement for young children. The role of parent involvement in the later years of schooling has received less attention. Past research on parent involvement has also been more heavily focused on associations with student achievement, with less attention to social and emotional domains of children's development. This propensity may be attributed to the academic nature of many of the behaviors defined as parent involvement like helping with homework. Such activities should prompt more enrichment at home and attunement to a child's academic progress. However, teachers and parents may discuss children's behavior in the classroom as well, since behavior problems and social functioning may have immediate consequences for the classroom environment and teachers’ instructional efforts. The aim of this study is to extend past research by examining within- and between-child associations among parent involvement and children's academic and socioemotional trajectories during elementary school.

Similarly, in terms of social development, parent involvement may facilitate the development of consistent disciplinary approaches across home and school. Accumulating evidence suggests that these parenting practices are associated with higher academic success in the early grades, although links to socioemotional outcomes remain less clear.

a recent study of Head Start students revealed that parent involvement was associated with lower conduct problems

parent involvement may also enhance children's behavior at home and in the classroom as parents and teachers work together to enhance social functioning and address problem behaviors

(8) ARTICLE

Strengthening Social and Emotional Competence in Young Children—the Foundation for Early School Readiness and Success

TOPIC

Social and emotional competence

Aggressive behaviors

SUBTOPIC

The Incredible Years Dinosaur Social Skills and ProblemSolving Child Training Program, which teaches skills such as emotional literacy, empathy or perspective taking, friendship and communication skills, anger management, interpersonal problem solving, and how to be successful at school

KEY TERMS

behavior problems, emotional regulation, problem-solving, school readiness, social competence

KEY STATISTICS

THE prevalence of aggressive behavior problems in preschool and early school age children is about 10%, and may be as high as 25% for socio-economically disadvantaged children

Teachers report that 16% to 30% of the students in their classrooms pose ongoing problems in terms of social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties

USEFUL QUOTATIONS

The ability of young children to manage their emotions and behaviors and to make meaningful friendships is an important prerequisite for school readiness and academic success. Socially competent children are also more academically successful and poor social skills are a strong predictor of academic failure

Moreover, strengthening young children’s capacity to manage their emotions and behavior, and to make meaningful friendships, particularly if they are exposed to multiple life-stressors, may serve an important protective function for school success. Research has indicated that children’s emotional, social, and behavioral adjustment is as important for school success as cognitive and academic preparedness

EMPHASES, STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES

Weakness:

Emphases:

Evidence suggests that without early intervention, emotional, social, and behavioral problems (particularly, aggression and oppositional behavior) in young children are key risk factors or “red flags” that mark the beginning of escalating academic problems, grade retention, school drop out, and antisocial behavior

-- One way is to work with parents to provide them with positive parenting strategies that will build their preschool children’s social competencies and academic readiness. Research shows that children with lower emotional and social competencies are more frequently found in families where parents express more hostile parenting, engage in more conflict, and give more attention to children’snegative than positive behaviors

-- A second approach to preventing and reducing young children’s behavior problems is to train teachers in classroom management strategies that promote social competence

-- A third approach to strengthening children’s social and emotional competence is to directly train them in social, cognitive, and emotional management skills such as friendly communication, problem solving, and anger management

(9) ARTICLE

TOPIC

SUBTOPIC

KEY TERMS

**Self-control** refers to the ability to manage or regulate emotion and behaviors, inhibit negative responses, and delay gratification in ways considered socially appropriate for a given situation

**persistence** in children as the “voluntary continuation of a goaldirected action in spite of obstacles, difficulties, or discouragement”

**Mastery orientation** is an approach to learning in which a child pursues learning because he or she wants to increase his or her overall competence or abilities over time until something is mastered.

**Academic self-efficacy** refers to a person’s belief that he or she can perform a variety of academic tasks effectively, while general self-efficacy refers to the belief in one’s ability to accomplish any task, along with the understanding that the actions one takes will influence a task’s outcome

**Social competence** refers to a broad set of skills necessary to get along with others and behave constructively in groups

KEY STATISTICS

USEFUL QUOTATIONS

EMPHASES, STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES

Weakness:

Emphases:

In the last 20 years, volumes of research have been published documenting and quantifying the importance of social and emotional learning in creating better outcomes for children. More and more, schools and youth-serving organizations are seeking ways to effectively integrate social and emotional learning into their classrooms and programs. But as of yet, the development of consistent standards, measures, and tools to support schools and organizations in measuring and monitoring these skills remains a need in the field

Child Trends conducted a systematic literature review of different social and emotional skills. This original review identified approximately 15 different skills linked to academic and/or future adult success, such as self-control, responsibility, attentiveness, prosocial behavior, and mastery orientation. Child Trends further narrowed the list of skills to those which the literature suggested were: selfcontrol, persistence, mastery orientation, social competence, and academic self-efficacy.